

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 VIENNA 001669

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/AGS - VIKMANIS-KELLER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: AUSTRIA CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF SOVEREIGNTY

REF: VIENNA 1484

1. On May 15, Austria commemorated the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Austrian State Treaty. The recreation of the proclamation of Austrian freedom at the baroque Belvedere Palace had all the emotional significance of the U.S. bicentennial, but on an Austrian scale. Key to the event was the presence of representatives of the four powers which occupied Austria from 1945 and signed the State Treaty in 1955. Former Senator Rudy Boschwitz headed a U.S. delegation that included Vincent Obsitnik, Alfred Hoffman and Davis Phillips, in addition to Ambassador Brown. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier, and British Minister of State for Europe Douglas Alexander participated in the events.

2. The center of the official celebration was a festive program in the Belevedere's Marble Hall, the site of the signing of the State Treaty fifty years ago. With the original document present in the room (on loan from Russia, the depository country), Senator Boschwitz called the State Treaty "a triumph of principle," noting that the Western allies and Austrian leaders insisted that a sovereign Austria had to be free and democratic. Senator Boschwitz said all countries which share those values had to work actively to extend their benefits throughout the world. Alexander spoke of the British contribution to Austria's political and economic development in the post-war years. Barnier stressed the importance of Austria's participation, along with France and the other members of the EU, to European integration. He also noted the need for a strong transatlantic relationship. Lavrov noted the contributions of Austrian neutrality to peace in Europe during the Cold War. Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel, Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik, and President Heinz Fischer recalled the difficult process of negotiating the State Treaty, thanked the Four Powers for their role in defeating Hitler's Germany and bringing about a free and democratic Austria, and celebrated Austria's success in achieving democratic and economic development. They noted the importance of "active neutrality" as permitting engagement in efforts to bring peace to areas such as the Balkans and the Middle East (where Austria has long participated in the UN's peacekeeping mission in the Golan Heights). Austrian speakers made special reference to the Marshall Plan, CARE packages, and other U.S. efforts to relieve Austria's desperate economic situation during the immediate post-war years.

3. The emotional high point of the program was a re-creation of the moment when the signers of the State Treaty emerged onto the balcony outside the Marble Hall. As in 1955 -- but without the treaty itself, which remained safely under glass inside -- the Austrian dignitaries and the representatives of the four powers stepped out to greet cheering crowds below.

4. In a city in which three world-class opera companies and their associated orchestras can play to full houses on the same night (as was the case on the night of May 14), staging is as important as substantive content. The Austrians had equal-sized delegations with the same vehicle configuration arrive at the front steps of the Belvedere in precise choreography. The Marble Hall was full, but not packed -- only a minimum of press, security and protocol personnel could remain around the fringes of the room. Three musical interludes during the program were all Mozart. First, Angelika Kirschlager and the Vienna Choir Boys opened the program with the cantata "Dir, Seele des Weltalls" (You, Soul of the Universe). The Vienna "Young Orchestra" then performed the "Religious March" from The Magic Flute after Chancellor Schuessel's speech, and a Sonata in A after Foreign Minister Plassnik's remarks. After the "balcony scene," the delegations joined the President, Chancellor and Foreign Minister for a private tour of the Belevedere's exhibit on the war, the occupation and the State Treaty. President Fischer's wife, Margit, who studied art history at the University of Vienna, accompanied Mrs. Boschwitz through the exhibit.

5. After the events at the Belvedere, Chancellor Schuessel hosted a luncheon at the "House of Industry," the seat of the Austrian Industrialists' Association. As with most elements of the program, this replicated the events of fifty years ago. During the luncheon, the delegation (including the Ambassador) met with President Fischer to deliver

congratulations on behalf of the United States.

16. Public events surrounded the official program. The Belvedere opened its newly-restored baroque gardens to thousands of visitors, who enjoyed various artistic programs as they awaited the "balcony scene." Crowds lined the streets to see the passing motorcades, and the appearance of the U.S.-flagged limousine brought uniformly happy waves and eager attempts to catch photographs. The reaction among ordinary Austrians to Senator Boschwitz's presence was friendly and appreciative.
Brown